

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1967
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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
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SUBJECT: TURKISH PRESS REPORTS AND COMMENTARY ON GREEK-TURKISH
RELATIONS
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1. SUMMARY: IN WAKE OF SFRC AND HIRC VOTES AND ECEVIT COMMENTS
DURING HIS CURRENT EUROPEAN TOUR, TURKISH PRESS REPORTED AND
EDITORIALIZED WIDELY ON GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS MAY 17. MILLIYET
REPORTS GREEK FONMIN RALLIS' RESPONSE TO PRIMIN ECEVIT'S ASSERTIONS
ABOUT THE THREAT POSED TO TURKEY BY GREECE. GUNAYDIN CLAIMS TURKEY'S
NEW DEFENSE CONCEPT WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE THREAT FROM GREECE.

A NUMBER OF EDITORIALISTS ADDRESS THE GROWING TENSION IN GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS, AND ABDI IPEKCI APPEALS TO GREEK PRIMIN KARAMANLIS TO RESPOND TO THE ECEVIT "PEACE OFFENSIVE" BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.
END SUMMARY.

2. FRONT PAGE STORY IN MILLIYET MAY 17, DATELINED ATHENS, REPORTS THAT NEW GREEK FONMIN GEORGE RALLIS ISSUED A WRITTEN STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO WHAT HE CHARACTERIZED AS PRIMIN ECEVIT'S "FREQUENT AND CONTRADICTORY" ANNOUNCEMENTS. THE RALLIS STATEMENT SAID THAT IT IS NOT GREECE WHICH THREATENS TURKEY, BUT TURKEY WHICH THREATENS GREECE, ACCORDING TO MILLIYET. RALLIS REPORTEDLY ALSO ASKED, "IN THE EVENT THE EMBARGO IS LIFTED, IS TURKEY PLANNING TO USE THE WEAPONS IT WILL RECEIVE AGAINST THE ENEMIES OF NATO OR AGAINST GREECE?"

3. IN AN APPARENTLY UNINTENDED BUT COINCIDENTAL RESPONSE, SENSATIONALIST GUNAYDIN CARRIES A FRONT PAGE STORY MAY 17 HEADLINED, "IN OUR NEW DEFENSE SYSTEM THE WEAPONS WILL BE DIRECTED AGAINST GREECE." THE GUNAYDIN STORY CITES GOVERNMENT AND DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES IN TURKEY CLAIMING GREECE WILL DERIVE THE GREATEST BENEFIT FROM THE CONTINUATION OF THE EMBARGO. THESE SAME CIRCLES REPORTEDLY SUPPORT PRIMIN ECEVIT'S CONTENTION THAT THE GREATEST THREAT TO TURKEY IN THE NEAR FUTURE IS NOT THE SOVIET UNION BUT GREECE. THEY ADD THAT TURKEY'S NEW DEFENSE CONCEPT WILL TAKE THIS ASSUMPTION AS ITS BASIS.

4. MILLIYET'S CHIEF EDITORIAL WRITER, ABDI IPEKCI, IN HIS COLUMN
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MAY 17 ASSESSES GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS AND CONCLUDES THAT GREECE'S UNFRIENDLY REACTION TO ECEVIT'S OVERTURES OF FRIENDSHIP AND GREECE'S EFFORTS TO WEAKEN THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES HAVE PUSHED TURKEY TO THE REALIZATION THAT IT IS FACE TO FACE WITH DANGER AND MUST ADJUST ITS DEFENSE POSTURE IN LINE WITH THIS REALITY. IPEKCI DEPLORES THE LOSS OF THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY AND WARNS THAT A NEW AND HARMFUL ARMS RACE MAY BE ABOUT TO BEGIN. THE CORRESPONDING RISE IN TENSIONS AND THREAT OF WAR BREAKING OUT AS A RESULT OF A SMALL ACCIDENT OR INCIDENT ARE, ACCORDING TO IPEKCI, "FRIGHTENING MADNESS". HE APPEALS PERSONALLY TO KARAMANLIS TO "WAKE UP, RECOGNIZE THE HAND OF FRIENDSHIP EXTENDED BY ECEVIT, AND REVIVE THE NOW FLICKERING HOPES ATTACHED TO YOUR STATESMANSHIP AND COMMON SENSE BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE."

5. EDITORIAL OPINION ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM MAY 17 ECHOED IPEKCI'S VIEW THAT GREECE, AS INDICATED BY WHAT ARE SEEN AS ITS ACTIVITIES TO KEEP TURKEY MILITARILY WEAK AND ITS REJECTION OF ECEVIT'S "PEACE OFFENSIVE" PRESENTS THE GREATEST THREAT TO TURKEY AT THIS TIME. ALI SIRMEN, WRITING IN LEFTIST AND GENERALLY ANTI-US CUMHURIYET, ASSERTS THAT TURKEY'S ENEMY IS NOT THE SOVIET UNION. INSTEAD, TURKEY'S TWO ENEMIES ARE GREECE AND THE US, THE LATTER OF WHICH, HE SAYS, HAS SHOWN ITS TRUE FACE THROUGH THE EMBARGO AGAINST

ITS NATO PARTNER, TURKEY. SPIERS

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